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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Examining the Importance of Non-Verbal Cues in Improving the Quality of Interpersonal Communication

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the role of non-verbal cues in enhancing the quality of interpersonal communication among the residents of Sangab village, Khahan district, Badakhshan province. This research is applied in terms of its purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of a data collection method. The statistical population included all residents over the age of 18 in Sangab village, estimated at 500 individuals. Due to the absence of a clear sampling frame (list of names) and the cultural and social conditions of the region, non-probability convenience sampling was used. Based on Morgan's table, 225 participants were selected as the sample. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect data. To assess the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, resulting in a value of 0.81, indicating an acceptable level of reliability. In addition, the content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by three university professors. The findings of the study showed that components such as facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures have a positive and significant relationship with factors such as mutual understanding, reduction of misunderstandings, increased intimacy, and strengthened trust. These results indicate that in human communication, words alone are not decisive; rather, non-verbal cues also play an important role in conveying meaning, emotions, and intentions. Finally, the results emphasize that non-verbal communication is one of the fundamental elements in shaping and improving the quality of social relationships.

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Introduction

Interpersonal communication is one of the fundamental elements in the development and advancement of human society. Without effective interaction, individuals cannot achieve mutual understanding, shared meaning, constructive cooperation, or effective management of social and cultural affairs. Therefore, the study of interpersonal communication is of particular importance (Haiyan, 2009). The present study focuses on the role of nonverbal cues and examines their impact on the quality of interpersonal communication among the residents of Sangab village in Khahan District, Badakhshan Province.

Interpersonal communication generally consists of two major dimensions: verbal and nonverbal communication. Although verbal communication occupies a significant role in human interaction, this does not diminish the importance and value of nonverbal communication. In most human interactions, a substantial portion of meaning is conveyed through nonverbal cues

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such as eye contact, tone of voice, physical touch, body movements, and facial expressions.

Human beings rely on nonverbal cues to satisfy their communicative needs and to understand the emotions, intentions, and goals of others (Hess, 2016). Furthermore, various aspects of personal appearance, including clothing style, grooming, physical characteristics, and the surrounding physical and social environment, play a significant role in the process of interpersonal communication (Ames, 1980). Accordingly, the primary objective of the present study is to examine the impact of nonverbal cues on the quality of interpersonal communication and to investigate their role in the social interactions and activities of the residents of Sangab Village, Khahan District.

Based on the principle of the impossibility of not communicating, nonverbal communication constitutes one of the most fundamental components of interpersonal interaction. The literature indicates that nonverbal communication encompasses a wide range of behaviors and responses through which messages are conveyed without the use of spoken language (Watzlawick et al., 1967, p. 51). This perspective is grounded in the assumption that all human behavior is meaningful and communicative (Wiener et al., 1972). Accordingly, it can be inferred that nonverbal cues play a central and indispensable role in interpersonal communication. Facial expressions, posture, silence, and body movements are among the key forms of nonverbal behavior that can substantially influence the effectiveness and quality of human interaction.

From a historical perspective, the scientific study of nonverbal communication gained prominence through the pioneering work of Charles Darwin, particularly in his book The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals. Darwin (1872) argued that emotional expressions have an evolutionary origin and have played a vital role in the survival and continuity of the human species. Building on Darwin's contributions, the development of kinesics, the study of body movements (Birdwhistell, 1970), and proxemics, the study of interpersonal use of space (Hall, 1963), further advanced the scientific understanding of nonverbal communication. In addition, several influential review studies made significant contributions to the development of this field (Duncan, 1969; Miller et al., 1959) . During the 1970s, research expanded considerably, with increasing attention devoted to the biological, cultural, and social dimensions of nonverbal communication (Hinde, 1972).

Subsequent research has demonstrated that nonverbal communication not only plays a crucial role in the expression of emotions but also facilitates the perception and interpretation of individuals' personality traits. For example, vocal characteristics and tone of voice can significantly influence both the transmission of a message and the way it is interpreted by others, while also providing important cues about an individual's personality (Scherer, 1978). Furthermore, scholars have concluded that nonverbal communication is an interdisciplinary field with broad applications across sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and, in certain contexts, the field of law (Hess, 2016). Moreover, the work of Burgoon and Pyron (1999) demonstrated that nonverbal cues are significantly associated with key relational dimensions, including social closeness, intimacy, dominance, and the degree of informality in interpersonal communication.

The findings of Coombs (2024) indicate that activities incorporating nonverbal communication can promote active learning, enhance communication skills, and improve individuals' ability to analyze and interpret nonverbal cues. These practices also foster greater empathy, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of interpersonal communication processes. Similarly, research by Michael and Mezbani (2023) suggests that the analysis of nonverbal behaviors provides a more accurate assessment of listening quality and individuals' responsiveness during interactions. Their findings further emphasize that these communication skills can be effectively learned and developed through training. Moreover, a study conducted by Azarmi (2023) demonstrated that the quality of doctor–patient communication and interpersonal interaction has a significant influence on the quality of medical care and subsequent health outcomes.

Numerous scholars have proposed theories on the role of nonverbal cues in interpersonal communication. Among the most influential is the Encoding–Decoding Theory proposed by Ekman and Friesen (1969), which emphasizes that a substantial proportion of messages in interpersonal communication is conveyed through nonverbal cues. According to this theory, some nonverbal cues are universal and can be understood across all societies, whereas others emerge within specific cultural contexts, are unique to those societies, and their meanings are understood primarily by members of the same culture. Similarly, Mehrabian (1972), in his Theory of Communication Dimensions, focused on three principal dimensions—liking, power, and activity—and identified them as fundamental elements of interpersonal

communication. According to this theory, when verbal and nonverbal messages are not congruent, the communication process becomes less effective. Likewise, Goffman's (1959) Impression Management Theory compares interpersonal communication, particularly social interaction, to theatrical performances, in which individuals attempt to use nonverbal cues in their own ways to influence and shape the perceptions of their audience and those around them.

Overall, the research conducted on nonverbal cues has not yet adequately addressed all segments of society or all regions of the world. Most of the existing studies have been carried out in urban areas, governmental institutions, and universities located in central regions, while rural communities and local ways of life, particularly in Afghanistan, have received relatively little attention. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which people in Sangab Village, Khahan District, Badakhshan, use nonverbal cues and the impact of these cues on their interpersonal relationships.

The primary research gap lies in the limited attention given to the role of nonverbal communication in improving the quality of interpersonal communication in rural communities and the lack of empirical evidence regarding its influence on the quality of social and interpersonal relationships. This study is conducted to examine the importance of nonverbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication in Sangab Village, Khahan District, with the aim of addressing this research gap and providing a clearer understanding of the existing situation. Furthermore, it is expected that the findings of this study will enrich the scholarly literature on nonverbal communication and contribute to improving social interactions, strengthening empathy, and enhancing interpersonal relationships within the community under study.

This study aims to examine the role of nonverbal cues in enhancing and maintaining the quality of interpersonal communication. Specifically, it investigates the extent to which the core elements of nonverbal communication, including facial expressions, body movements, and gestures, are associated with mutual understanding, the reduction of misunderstandings, intimacy, and trust in interpersonal relationships, and the extent to which the residents of Sangab Village use these nonverbal cues.

Accordingly, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Is there a positive and significant relationship between nonverbal cues and the quality of interpersonal communication?
2. Is increased mutual understanding among individuals associated with facial expressions and eye contact?
3. Can body language and body movements contribute to reducing misunderstandings in interpersonal communication?
4. Do nonverbal cues play a significant role in strengthening intimacy and increasing trust among individuals?

Research Methodology

This study was conducted using a quantitative research design and a descriptive survey method. This approach is considered appropriate for analyzing and examining the existing situation and identifying patterns and relationships among variables without manipulation or intervention (Creswell & Creswell, 2026). In this type of research, data are collected systematically and based on numerical information to enable accurate description and analysis of the phenomenon under investigation. Within the framework of this study, data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire to examine and analyze information related to the importance of non-verbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication. The statistical population of the study consisted of approximately 500 residents of Sangab village in Khahan district, Badakhshan province. Based on Morgan's table, 217 individuals were selected as the sample. However, in order to compensate for possible incomplete or unusable questionnaires, 8 additional questionnaires were distributed. Consequently, a total of 225 questionnaires were used in the research process.

Furthermore, since the questionnaire was developed by the researcher, a pilot test was conducted before the main study. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a value of 0.82, and its content validity was confirmed by three university professors.

Population and Sampling

The statistical population of this study consisted of 500 residents of Sangab village in Khahan district, Badakhshan province. This population size was considered appropriate for a limited-scale educational study, as it allowed for manageable yet meaningful statistical analysis. Due to the absence of a defined sampling frame, such as a list of residents' names, as well as the cultural and social conditions of the region, a non-probability convenience

sampling method was used. This approach facilitated access to respondents in the research setting and was more suitable for the field conditions of the area.

In order to reduce potential sampling bias, efforts were made to select participants from different parts of the village and various age groups to maintain relative diversity within the sample.

Accordingly, data were collected from individuals who were present in various settings, including shops, mosques, workplaces, and their private homes. In addition, all participants were at least 18 years of age and were considered eligible to complete the questionnaire.

Data Collection Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed questionnaire. To establish its content validity, the questionnaire was submitted to three faculty members at Faryab University for evaluation. Each questionnaire item was assessed in terms of clarity, relevance to the research topic, and consistency with the study objectives. Based on their comments and suggestions, minor revisions were made to several items, and the content validity of the research instrument was subsequently confirmed. To further ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated. The resulting coefficient was 0.81, indicating an acceptable level of reliability for the research instrument.

The questionnaire used in this study consists of six thematic sections, each of which was developed based on the principal constructs identified in the theoretical literature of the study.

These sections are as follows:

- Facial expressions: This section included 4 items examining the perception of emotions, recognition of true messages, attention to facial states, and their importance in communication.
- Eye contact: This section also included 4 items and addressed topics such as receiving messages through gaze, attention to eye contact patterns, perception of sincerity, and detection of disinterest through the eyes.
- Body movements and gestures: This section consisted of 4 items and examined the role of body movements in conveying emotions and intentions, better message interpretation, attention to movements during speech, and identification of individuals' true feelings.
- Mutual understanding: This section included 4 items and covered accurate interpretation of messages without misunderstanding, understanding individuals' intentions, recognition of true meanings, and conscious communication.
- Reduction of misunderstanding and conflict: This section contained 4 items measuring correct interpretation of messages, improvement of communication without conflict, prevention of misunderstandings, and reduction of interpersonal tension.
- Intimacy and Trust: This variable was measured using four questionnaire items and assessed participants' sense of closeness in relationships, level of trust, sense of security, and the development of intimate relationships.

All sections were structured based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This structure allowed respondents to express their level of agreement or disagreement more precisely, resulting in more analyzable quantitative data.

addition, the questionnaire included a demographic section to record participants' personal characteristics, which were used in subsequent analyses.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process began on 5 January 2026 and continued until 3 February 2026, when it was completed. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researchers verbally explained the ethical considerations and the purpose of the study to prevent any misunderstanding or suspicion among the participants. It was clearly stated that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that respondents had the right to decide whether or not to participate. Participants were also assured that all information they provided would be kept confidential and used solely for the purposes of this research. Furthermore, they were informed that if they experienced any discomfort, anxiety, or concern during the study, they were free to withdraw from participation at any time without any consequences.

The questionnaires were administered in person at various locations, including mosques, marketplaces, workplaces, and private homes. The distribution process was conducted in a suitable and calm environment to ensure that participants remained comfortable and were able to respond with accuracy and concentration. Completing each questionnaire took approximately 10–20 minutes, allowing respondents sufficient time to read the questions carefully and provide thoughtful and accurate answers.

Immediately after the questionnaires were completed, they were collected by the researchers and stored in an organized and secure manner. Access to the completed questionnaires and the collected data was restricted exclusively to the research team. Subsequently, the data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics for statistical analysis. It should be noted that no personally identifiable information from the respondents was entered into the database, and the principles of confidentiality and data protection were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

Initially, the collected data were coded and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). A five-point Likert scale was used for each questionnaire item, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To generate analyzable indices, composite scores for each of the six main study variables were calculated by computing the mean of the corresponding items measured on the same scale.

Before conducting the main statistical analyses, a preliminary data screening procedure was performed to ensure the quality and accuracy of the dataset. The assessment of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, this finding was taken into account when interpreting the study results.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations constitute one of the most fundamental aspects of the research process and must be observed throughout all stages of a study. Accordingly, before completing the questionnaire, all participants were provided with clear information regarding the objectives of the research, the measures taken to protect their privacy and maintain the confidentiality of their information, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Participants were also informed that their involvement in the study w entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to their participation.

As noted previously, the principles of confidentiality and data privacy were strictly observed throughout the study. No personal identifiers or contact information were collected from the respondents. Consequently, there was no means of linking any completed questionnaire to an individual participant. Hard-copy questionnaires were stored in a secure, locked location, while access to the digital data was restricted exclusively to the research team. These measures were implemented to provide participants with a secure and pressure-free environment, enabling them to respond honestly and openly without concern about judgment, loss of privacy, or any potential negative consequences. Such safeguards helped ensure that participants could complete the questionnaires with confidence and peace of mind.

Findings

This section of the study presents the results obtained from the analysis of the quantitative data conducted to examine the importance of nonverbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication. The findings are organized and presented according to six main dimensions. These six dimensions are facial expressions, eye contact, body movements and gestures, mutual understanding, reduction of misunderstandings and conflict, and intimacy and trust.

Each section is described using the descriptive statistics for its corresponding questionnaire items, and the results are presented in tabular form. In addition, supplementary explanations are provided to facilitate a better understanding and clearer interpretation of the variables, allowing the highest and lowest mean scores for each dimension to be identified precisely. This structure enables a more accurate comparison among the different dimensions of nonverbal communication and their roles in the quality of interpersonal relationships.

Table 1. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Variables	Statistic	Sig.
Facial expressions	.145	.000
Eye contact	.128	.000
Body movements and gestures	.161	.000
Mutual understanding	.128	.000
Reduction of misunderstanding and conflict	.124	.000
Intimacy and trust	.106	.000

Based on Table 1, the results indicated that none of the variables examined followed a normal distribution. Therefore, the use of parametric tests for data analysis was not considered appropriate.

Accordingly, Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses of this study. This method is more appropriate for analyzing variables that do not satisfy the assumption of normality. The application of this test enabled a more accurate assessment

of the relationships among the different dimensions of nonverbal cues and the quality of interpersonal communication and, consequently, provided a more reliable basis for the analysis and interpretation of the research data.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Based on the collected data, a total of 225 residents of Sangab Village, Khahan District, Badakhshan Province, participated in this study.

The findings indicate that 51.1% of the respondents belonged to the 18–30-year-old age group, demonstrating a high level of participation among young adults. Therefore, these findings suggest that young people played a prominent role in responding to the questionnaire and cooperating with the study.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics

Variabler	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-30	115	51.1
	31-45	69	30.7
	46-60	22	9.8
	61 and above	18	8
Gender	Male	154	68.4
	Female	65	28.9
Education level	Illiterate	7	3.1
	Basic Literate	34	15.1
	Grade 12 graduate	65	28.9
	14th-grade graduate	44	19.6
	Bachelor's degree	70	31.1
Occupation	Farmer	13	5.8
	Self-employed	52	23.1
	Employee	55	24.4
	University student/school student	23	10.2
	Other	68	30.2
Length of residence in the village (years)	15-Jan	23	10.2
	16-30	99	44
	31-45	52	23.1
	46-60	12	5.3
	60 and above	15	6.7

It should be noted that the majority of the respondents (68.4%) were male. This finding is largely consistent with the social structure of traditional Afghan society, particularly in rural areas, where access to men is generally easier than access to women due to prevailing social and cultural norms. The same situation was observed in the present study.

With regard to the educational level of the respondents, it should be noted that 31.1% held a bachelor's degree, indicating a relatively satisfactory level of educational attainment among a segment of the residents of Sangab Village.

With regard to employment status, the largest proportion of respondents (30.2%) fell into the "Other" category, indicating a diversity of occupations and the absence of concentration in a single profession among the participants.

Regarding the length of residence in the village, the largest proportion of participants (44%) reported that they had lived in Sangab Village for 16–30 years. This finding indicates a combination of relative population stability and the presence of individuals with varying lengths of residence in the village.

The proper use of facial expressions and eye contact increases mutual understanding and reduces

misunderstandings and conflicts in interpersonal communication.

Given the non-normal distribution of the data, Spearman's correlation test was used to examine the first hypothesis in order to analyze the relationship between the relevant variables more accurately and in accordance with the characteristics of the data.

Spearman's Correlation Results for Examining the relationship between Facial expressions and Mutual Understanding and Eye Contact Mutual Understanding

Table 3. spearman's Correlation Results for Examining the relationship between Facial expressions with Mutual understanding and Eye Contact Mutual understanding

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Facial expressions Mutual understanding	0.291	0.000
Eye contact Mutual understanding	0.250	0.000

Table 3 shows that there is a positive but weak relationship between facial expressions and mutual understanding. The Spearman correlation coefficient is 0.291, and its significance level is 0.001, indicating a positive and statistically significant relationship between these two variables. In other words, with an improvement in the perception and attention to facial expressions, mutual understanding also increases to some extent, although the strength of this relationship is not strong.

Similarly, the results regarding eye contact and mutual understanding indicate that there is also a positive but relatively weak relationship between these two variables. The Spearman correlation coefficient in this case is 0.250, with a significance level of 0.001, which confirms a positive and statistically significant relationship between eye contact and mutual understanding.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the first sub-hypothesis is confirmed at the 95% confidence level. This hypothesis stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between facial expressions and mutual understanding, as well as between eye contact and mutual understanding among the residents of Sangab village.

Body movements and gestures have a direct relationship with increased intimacy and trust between individuals.

Table 4. spearman's Correlation Results for Examining the relationship between Body movements and gestures with Intimacy and trust

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Body movements and gestures Intimacy and trust	0.371	0.000

Table 4 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between body movements and gestures and intimacy and trust. The Spearman correlation coefficient in this section is 0.371, and its significance level is reported as P<0.001. These results indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between body movements and gestures and the level of intimacy and trust among individuals. In other words, as the use and understanding of bodily and gestural cues increases, the level of intimacy and trust among individuals also increases relatively.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the second sub-hypothesis is confirmed at the 95% confidence level. This hypothesis stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between body movements and gestures and intimacy and trust among the residents of Sangab village.

The use of a combination of nonverbal cues (facial expressions, eye contact, and body language) leads to a reduction in misunderstandings and interpersonal conflicts.

Table 5. spearman's Correlation Results for Examining the relationship between Non Verbal Cues with Reduction of misunderstanding and conflict

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Total_NonVerbal Reduction of misunderstanding and conflict	0.278	0.000

Table 5 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-verbal communication and the reduction of misunderstanding and conflict. The Spearman correlation coefficient in this section is 0.278, and its significance level is P<0.001. These results indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between non-verbal communication and the level of reduced misunderstanding and conflict among individuals. In other words, strengthening non-verbal cues

in interactions can help reduce misinterpretations and lower communicational tensions.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the third sub-hypothesis is confirmed at the 95% confidence level. This hypothesis stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-verbal communication and the reduction of misunderstanding and conflict among the residents of Sangab village.

There is a positive and significant relationship between nonverbal cues (facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures) and the quality of interpersonal communication (mutual understanding, reduction of misunderstandings, intimacy, and trust).

Table 6. spearman's Correlation Results for Examining the relationship between Non-Verbal Cues with Improving communication quality

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Significance
Total_NonVerbal Improving communication quality	0.515	0.000

Table 6 shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-verbal communication and the quality of communication. The Spearman correlation coefficient is 0.515, and its significance level is 0.000. These results indicate that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between non-verbal communication and communication quality among the residents of Sangab village. In other words, as the use of and attention to non-verbal cues increases, the quality of interpersonal communication also improves.

Accordingly, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the main research hypothesis is confirmed at the 95% confidence level. This hypothesis stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-verbal communication and communication quality among the residents of Sangab village.

Overall, it can be concluded that non-verbal cues play an important and decisive role in improving the quality of interpersonal communication, and strengthening them can lead to the enhancement of social interactions.

Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the role of nonverbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication in Sangab Village, Khahan District, Badakhshan Province. Overall, the study investigated the relationships between facial expressions, eye contact, and body movements and gestures and the variables of mutual understanding, reduction of misunderstandings, intimacy, and trust.

The results of the Spearman correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between facial expressions and eye contact and mutual understanding. This finding suggests that greater attention to facial expressions and the establishment of eye contact can contribute to improving mutual understanding in interpersonal communication. Therefore, the first sub-hypothesis of the study, which proposed a positive relationship between eye contact and mutual understanding, was supported. This result is consistent with the studies of Bonaccio et al. (2016); Dunbar et al. (2022); Hess (2016) and Mandal (2014), which emphasize the extensive role of non-verbal cues in transmitting messages and understanding emotions.

They argue that an important part of interpersonal communication is conveyed through eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, and other nonverbal cues, and that individuals interpret and understand the emotions and thoughts of others based on these nonverbal signals.

In addition, the results indicate that these findings are consistent with the views of Bavelas (2021) and Patterson et al. (2023) regarding the principle of the "impossibility of not communicating." This perspective maintains that even in the absence of spoken language, communicative messages are conveyed through nonverbal behaviors and movements. 13 This is also observable in rural contexts, where individuals interpret each other's messages based on prior familiarity and reading of facial expressions. In addition, the findings are consistent with Ekman and Friesen's (1969) encoding–decoding theory, which suggests that a large portion of human messages is conveyed through non-verbal cues, some of which are biologically universal while others are culturally shaped and interpreted differently across societies.

In another part of the results, a positive relationship was observed between body movements and gestures and intimacy and trust. This finding is consistent with the studies of Burgoon et al. (2021); Coombs (2024); Schrage et al. (2020) and Mayor (2020). These studies show that non-verbal cues play an important role in shaping relational perceptions such as intimacy, trust, and the degree of informality in interactions. Moreover, these cues can enhance active learning, improve communication skills, and increase the ability to interpret non-verbal behaviors. In addition, the results suggest that the proper

use of these cues can also increase empathy and mutual understanding.

The findings of Lee et al. (2021); Pearsell and Pape (2023) and Stern et al. (2021), also emphasize that non-verbal cues play a significant role in shaping others' perceptions of personality traits. In this regard, Goffman's (1959) impression management theory explains that individuals in social interactions attempt to present a favorable image of themselves, and in this process, they use non-verbal behaviors such as posture, sitting style, and body movements as tools to manage others' impressions.

The results related to the third sub-hypothesis indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between non-verbal communication and the reduction of misunderstanding and conflict.

In fact, when individuals use verbal communication alongside nonverbal cues such as eye contact, body movements, and facial expressions, this combination helps them communicate and convey their messages more effectively, resulting in better understanding and mutual comprehension. This also highlights the importance of giving greater attention to the teaching and development of communication skills. On the other hand, nonverbal cues can play a significant role in reducing misunderstandings, minimizing social problems, and improving interpersonal communication, particularly in rural communities. This finding is also consistent with Mehrabian's (1974) theory, which emphasizes that inconsistency between verbal and nonverbal messages leads to reduced trust and a decline in the quality of communication.

Furthermore, the study hypothesis was supported, and the findings demonstrated that there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between nonverbal communication and the quality of interpersonal communication. This result is in line with the findings of Carmichael and Mizrahi (2023); Coombs (2024) and Hess (2016). These studies indicate that non-verbal communication-related activities can enhance active learning, strengthen communication skills, and improve the ability to interpret non-verbal cues. Accordingly, human messages are not transmitted only through words but are also effectively conveyed through facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and tone of voice. Moreover, these findings are consistent with Azarmi's (2023) study, which shows that the quality of interaction between doctor and patient has a direct impact on treatment processes and health outcomes.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that non-verbal cues play an important and significant role in improving the quality of interpersonal communication among the residents of Sangab village, Khahan district, Badakhshan province. The statistical analyses also demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between different components of non-verbal communication—namely facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures—and dimensions of interpersonal communication quality such as mutual understanding, reduction of misunderstanding, intimacy, and trust. This suggests that human communication is not limited to the transmission of verbal messages; rather, a substantial part of meaning is conveyed through non-verbal cues.

As most previous studies have focused on cities, offices, organizations, and academic settings, the present study was conducted in a remote rural community in Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be said that this study fills a gap in the existing literature, as little attention has been given to whether nonverbal cues are used in rural communities. The findings demonstrate that nonverbal cues are indeed used in rural settings to improve interpersonal communication and that the application of these nonverbal cues is not limited to a particular region or geographical area.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this study can be applied in areas such as healthcare services, social activities, educational programs, and public relations institutions. Education and training in the use of nonverbal cues can increase trust and reduce social and interpersonal tensions. Furthermore, learning how to use these nonverbal cues can promote empathy, acceptance, and better interpersonal communication, particularly in rural communities where interactions are predominantly close and face-to-face.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that nonverbal cues are not only supportive of verbal communication but also play a fundamental and essential role in building trust, reducing conflicts, and improving mutual understanding in interpersonal communication. Conscious attention to these nonverbal cues can facilitate the development of better human relationships and significantly enhance the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

The exchange of messages among human beings has existed since the beginning of human life, and the formation of human society would not have been possible without the sending and receiving of messages among

individuals. Human language is a fundamental element in establishing human communication and plays an important role in distinguishing human beings from other creatures. In fact, it is through the power of language that humans are superior to and differentiated from other animals. Without language, social structures and group and interpersonal communication would undoubtedly face serious challenges.

For this reason, since the beginning of human existence, people have communicated with one another through spoken and written language, as well as through nonverbal language, including body movements, facial expressions, and other nonverbal cues. These forms of communication facilitate mutual understanding and improve interpersonal relationships, ultimately contributing to the growth and development of human society.

It is well known that interpersonal communication takes place through two main forms: verbal communication and nonverbal communication. Verbal communication involves the sending and receiving of messages through spoken and written language, whereas nonverbal communication refers to the transmission of messages through nonlinguistic means, such as body movements, facial expressions, and eye contact. Although the importance of verbal communication is undeniable, the role of nonverbal communication is equally important and should not be overlooked.

It should be noted that the purpose of this study was to examine the importance of nonverbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication among the residents of Sangab Village, Khahan District, Badakhshan Province, and the results obtained showed that nonverbal cues are among the most important main elements in improving the quality of interpersonal and social communication. On the other hand, it was found that facial expressions, eye contact, body movements, and gestures have a positive and significant relationship with factors such as mutual understanding, the reduction of misunderstandings, increased intimacy, and strengthened trust. Based on the results obtained, it is emphasized that human communication, especially interpersonal communication, is not limited only to verbal communication and words; rather, nonverbal cues play a key role in establishing communication and in understanding and conveying emotions and the intended meaning of messages.

From a scientific perspective, the study conducted has particular value and significance because it examined nonverbal cues in a new setting, namely a rural community in Afghanistan. In contrast, previous studies have mostly been limited to urban environments, educational institutions, and mainly densely populated centers, cities, or suburban areas. The findings of this study show that nonverbal communication, that is, nonverbal cues, is widely used among rural residents and has played an important role in the quality of interpersonal communication in rural communities. This study fills part of the existing gap in the research literature of Afghanistan in the field of communication, particularly nonverbal communication, and contributes to the development of future research in the field of human communication.

In addition to its scientific significance, this study also has practical and applied value. The findings indicate that awareness of nonverbal cues and their appropriate use can provide multiple benefits and contribute to reducing conflicts, increasing trust, and improving the overall quality of social relationships. In particular, in communities where communication is primarily direct or face-to-face, the conscious use of these nonverbal cues can strengthen empathy, reduce misunderstandings, and play a fundamental role in improving the quality of interpersonal interactions. Sectors such as social services, social management, family relationships, education, and public relations institutions can benefit most from the findings of this study.

The results showed that the research hypotheses were accepted as statistically significant. From a methodological perspective, this study was conducted using a quantitative survey approach, and the relationships among the variables were examined through Spearman's rank-order correlation analysis. It should be noted that the study of nonverbal communication, in addition to having a theoretical foundation, can also be measured and examined empirically. Furthermore, it provides valid evidence and documentation for a better understanding of this phenomenon.

However, the present study was also faced with some limitations. One of these was that the study population was limited to a single village within one district and did not include any other villages. In addition, the use of convenience sampling reduced the generalizability of the findings to other regions. Furthermore, the survey nature of the study, which relied on the participants' self-reported perceptions, did not allow for the direct observation of actual behaviors, and this is also considered one of the major limitations of the study.

For this reason, it is recommended that future studies conducted by researcher's use mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative approaches), field observation techniques, and larger samples to examine different dimensions of communication, particularly nonverbal communication, on a broader scale. It is also important that future research pay attention to factors such as culture, gender, and generation, as these can provide a more accurate understanding of individual and behavioral differences. Furthermore, comparing urban and rural communities can contribute to enriching future findings in the field of nonverbal communication.

In conclusion, it can be stated that this study demonstrated that nonverbal cues are not only complementary to and supportive of verbal communication, but also constitute a fundamental and decisive part of the process of human communication, particularly interpersonal communication. The conscious and purposeful use of these cues can improve and strengthen the quality of social relationships, enhance mutual understanding, and reduce interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings.

Limitations of the study

Every research has its own limitations, and the present study is not free from them. As is known, every descriptive study is faced with limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings. The first limitation is the size of the study population. The study population of this research consists of the residents of Sangab Village, Khahan District, who are 18 years of age and older. Therefore, the sample size is appropriate and acceptable for a small-scale study; however, the applicability and generalizability of the findings to other districts and provinces of Afghanistan are limited.

Since the information was collected based on the participants' personal responses regarding the importance of nonverbal cues in interpersonal communication, there is a limitation that factors such as personal bias, memory errors, or certain other attitudes may have influenced the participants. This issue raises the possibility that these factors may have affected the collected data.

Another limitation of this study is the exclusive use of the quantitative method. Although this approach is appropriate for identifying general patterns and examining the relationships among variables, it has a limited ability to provide an in-depth understanding of individuals' personal experiences, feelings, and subtle perceptions.

Despite all the above-mentioned limitations, efforts were made to design and conduct this study in such a way that the effects of these limitations were reduced as much as possible. Therefore, the findings of this study can still make a valuable contribution to enriching the existing knowledge regarding the role of nonverbal cues in improving the quality of interpersonal communication.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors and researchers declare that they have no financial, commercial, or personal conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article and its content.

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Author Contributions

This research article is the result of the joint collaboration of three authors, each of whom assumed a distinct and significant role in conducting and completing the study.

Dawlat Mohammad Sayadi was responsible for the conceptualization of the study and the overall supervision of the research process. He also led the data collection and was primarily responsible for writing the Introduction and developing the Literature Review.

Zabihullah Bashardost contributed to the preparation of the remaining sections of the manuscript and was responsible for drafting the Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations sections, as well as preparing the reference list, performing the language editing, and completing the final formatting of the manuscript.

Karimullah Noori played an active and significant role in the final revision of the manuscript, correcting errors, ensuring the quality of the scientific content, analyzing the data, and preparing the statistical results.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study will be made available, upon reasonable request, by the researchers and authors to individuals from various fields, particularly researchers in the areas of communication and journalism, through the corresponding author.

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